- Agreement has been signed by USOF with BSNL for provision of Rural Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs) 'on demand' in 88 commercially unviable Short Distance Charging "Areas (SDCAs). These would be available in the first quarter of the year 2006.
- A sum of Rs. 22.27 crore has been disbursed so far towards providing financial assistance for MARR replacement and capital cost/operations/maintenance of rural public telephones in Chhattisgarh Telecom circle.

New Telecom Policy

2455. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a new Telecom Policy is on the anvil;

(b) whether it is proposed to clip the wings or curtail the powers of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India by transferring certain function to Department of Communications; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) At present there is no proposal under consideration to redefine powers and functions of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India by amending Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997.

(c) Does not arise in view of (b) above.

Depth of towers

2456. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether depth of the towers for receiving the networK without any disturbances are as per the norms in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government propose to take action against the erring companies; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) The depth of tower depends upon soil conditions, height of tower and type of tower. The depth of tower has no correlation to the reception of the network or signal disturbances.

(c) and (d) Do not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

Printing of telephone directory

2457. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to refer to the reply to Unstarred Question 160 given in Rajya Sabha on 24th November, 2005 and state:

(a) whether TRAI has given its recommendation on printing of telephone directory and directory enquiry services for basic and mobile telephone services;

(b) since how long this recommendation of TRAI is pending; and

(c) whether any time-frame has been fixed within which a decision could be taken looking at the security threat in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has given its recommendations on "Printing of Telephone Directory and Directory Enquiry Services" for basic and mobile telephone service on 5th May, 2005.

(c) As these are policy issues which require detailed examination, no specific time-frame can be fixed.

Artificial barriers for 'One India' tariff plan

2458. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) what are the artificial barriers found in the way so as to pave the way for introduction on "One India' tarriff plan;